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EXAMINER

GEIB, BENJAMIN P

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2181

DATE MAILED: 09/28/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/750,150	HAMMOND ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Benjamin P. Geib	2181	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 July 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

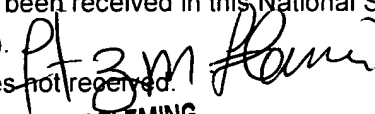
Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.


FRITZ FLEMING
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2108
9/26/2006

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-21 have been examined.
2. It is hereby acknowledged that the following papers have been received and placed of record in the file: Amendment as received on 07/13/2006.

Withdrawn Rejections

3. Applicant, via amendment, has overcome the 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, rejections set forth in the previous Office Action. Consequently, these rejections have been withdrawn by the examiner.

Claim Objections

4. Claims 11-13 are objected to because of the following informalities:
Regarding claim 11, the word "store" in the limitation "instruction scheduler to store track only store instructions" should be removed as it appears to be a typographical error.
5. All claims objected to that have not been specifically addressed above are objected to on the basis of dependence.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. Applicant has failed to overcome the 35 U.S.C. 102 and 35 U.S.C. 103 rejections set forth in the previous Office Action for claims 1-21. Therefore, these rejections are respectfully maintained by the examiner and copied below for applicant's convenience.

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7. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35

U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this

Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

8. Claims 1-3, 5-7, 14, 17, and 19-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Morris et al., U.S. Patent Application Publication No.

2004/0168045 (Herein referred to as Morris).

9. Referring to claim 1, Morris has taught a method comprising:

issuing a load instruction to an execution cluster [*execution unit; Fig. 1, component 20*] in an out of order processor [*See paragraphs 22-24*]; and

allocating an entry for the load instruction in a structure [*speculative-load-instruction manager (SLIM); Fig. 1, component 29*] for tracking only non-retired load instructions only if the load instruction utilizes speculative data [*See paragraph 15*].

10. Referring to claim 2, Morris has taught the method of claim 1, further comprising:

indicating the load instruction that uses speculative data is to be checked at retirement [*By entering a load instruction into the SLIM, it is indicated that the*

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instruction is to be considered further (i.e. checked) at retirement of the corresponding check instruction; See paragraphs 29 and 32]; and

searching the structure for tracking only load instructions for the entry for the load instruction to confirm the load data at the time of retirement *[At retirement a check instruction finds the corresponding s-load instruction (i.e. searches the SLIM) and determines whether or not the corresponding s-load instruction has been rendered invalid (i.e. the load data is confirmed); See paragraph 32].*

11. Referring to claim 3, Morris has taught the method of claim 1, further comprising:

invalidating the entry for the load instruction during a store instruction retirement if the store instruction conflicts with the load instruction *[If the s-load syndrome matches that broadcast by a store instruction (i.e. a store instruction conflicts with the load instruction) the s-load is marked invalid in the SLIM; See paragraph 30].*

12. Referring to claim 5, Morris has taught the method of claim 1, wherein the load instruction is an advanced load instruction *[The load instruction has been advanced in front of a store instruction; See paragraph 5].*

13. Referring to claim 6, Morris has taught the method of claim 5, further comprising: converting a basic load instruction into an advanced load instruction *[See paragraph 12].*

14. Referring to claim 7, Morris has taught the method of claim 1, wherein the structure for tracking load instructions is an advanced load allocation table *[The*

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SLIM is a table that allocates entries for speculative advanced load instructions and is, therefore, an advanced load allocation table; See paragraph 15].

15. Referring to claim 14, Morris has taught an apparatus comprising:

means for tracking only non-retired speculative load instructions
[speculative-load-instruction manager (SLIM); Fig. 1, component 29; See paragraph 15]; and

means for tracking all instructions in program order *[instruction queue; Fig. 1, component 25; See paragraph 23]* coupled to the means for tracking only non-retired speculative load instructions, comprising a field to indicate a load instruction is to be checked at retirement *[A speculative load instruction has a corresponding load check instruction, which is stored in an instruction queue field and indicates that the load instruction is to be checked at retirement; See paragraph 15].*

16. Referring to claim 17, Morris has taught a machine readable medium having instructions stored therein which when executed cause a machine to perform a set of operations comprising:

tracking only a set of non-retired load instructions relying on speculative data in a first data structure of an out of order processor *[speculative-load-instruction manager (SLIM); Fig. 1, component 29; See paragraph 15]; and*

tracking a set of instructions in program order in a second data structure *[instruction queue; Fig. 1, component 25; See paragraph 23]* having a field to indicate to check speculation in a load instruction at a time of load instruction retirement *[A speculative load instruction has a corresponding load check*

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instruction, which is stored in an instruction queue field and indicates that the load instruction is to be checked at retirement; See paragraph 15].

17. Referring to claim 19, Morris has taught the machine readable medium of claim 17, having instructions stored therein which when executed cause a machine to perform a set of operations further comprising:

invalidating allocated load instruction entries during store instruction retirement *[If the s-load syndrome matches that broadcast by a store instruction the s-load is marked invalid (i.e. the load entry is invalidated) in the SLIM; See paragraph 30].*

18. Referring to claim 20, Morris has taught the machine readable medium of claim 17, wherein the first data structure is an advanced load allocation table *[The SLIM is a table that allocates entries for speculative advanced load instructions and is, therefore, an advanced load allocation table; See paragraph 15].*

19. Referring to claim 21, Morris has taught the machine readable medium of claim 17, wherein the second data structure is a reorder buffer *[The instruction queue retires instructions in order (i.e. reorders the instructions) and, therefore, it is a reorder buffer; See paragraph 23].*

20. Claims 8 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by McNairy et al., "Itanium 2 Processor Microarchitecture" (Herein referred to as McNairy).

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21. Referring to claim 8, McNairy has taught a device comprising:

a store queue [*store buffer; See Fig. 4*] in an out of order processor to

track only store instructions [*page 52, 2nd column, 1st paragraph*]; and

a load queue [*ALAT; See Fig. 1*] coupled to the store queue to track only non-retired speculative load instructions [*page 51, 2nd column, last paragraph*].

22. Referring to claim 10, McNairy has taught the device of claim 8, wherein the load queue is an advanced load allocation table [*page 51, 2nd column, last paragraph*].

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

23. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

24. Claims 9, 11, and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNairy in view of Johnson, "Superscalar Microprocessor Design".

25. Referring to claim 9,

McNairy has taught the device of claim 8, further comprising:

an instruction scheduler [*instruction decode and dispersal unit; See Fig. 1*] coupled to the store queue to schedule instruction execution [*The dispersal logic*]

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assigns instructions to execution units (i.e. schedules their execution); See 3rd paragraph of the section labeled "Instruction dispersal", which starts on page 48];
and

McNairy has not explicitly taught a reorder buffer coupled to the instruction scheduler to track program order of instructions and to track speculative load instructions to be checked at retirement.

Johnson has taught a reorder buffer [See section 5.1.4 on pages 92-94] coupled to the instruction scheduler to track program order of instructions and to track speculative load instructions to be checked at retirement [The reorder buffer tracks all instructions, including load instructions that are to be checked at retirement; See 1st full paragraph on page 93].

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the device of McNairy to include a reorder buffer coupled to the instruction scheduler to track program order of instructions and to track speculative load instructions to be checked at retirement as taught by Johnson.

The suggestion/motivation for doing so would have been that doing so simplifies the maintenance of the instruction order [See 1st paragraph of section labeled "Using a Reorder Buffer to Simplify the Central Window" on page 139].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Johnson with McNairy to obtain the invention as specified in claim 9.

26. Referring to claim 11,

McNairy has taught a system comprising:

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a first processor [*Itanium 2 processor; See Fig. 1*] having at least a 64 bit architecture [*See 1st paragraph of section labeled "Microarchitecture overview" on page 44*] comprising

a first data cache [*L1D cache; See Fig. 1*],

set of execution units [*Integer ALUs; See Fig. 1*],

instruction scheduler [*Instruction decode and dispersal unit; See Fig. 1; See section labeled "Instruction dispersal" starting on page 48*] coupled to the data cache and set of execution units,

a store queue [*store buffer; See Fig. 4*] coupled to the instruction scheduler to track only store instructions [*See page 52, 2nd column, 1st paragraph*] and

a load queue [*ALAT; See Fig. 1*] coupled to the store queue to track only non-retired speculative load instructions [*See page 51, 2nd column, last paragraph*];

a bus coupled to the processor [*System interface bus; See Fig. 4*]; and

a system memory device [*system memory; See 3rd paragraph under subsection labeled "System interface"*] coupled to the bus.

McNairy has not explicitly taught that the instruction scheduler is an out of order instruction scheduler.

Johnson has taught out of order instruction issuing (i.e. scheduling) [*1st and 2nd paragraphs on page 21*].

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the instruction scheduler of McNairy to schedule instruction out of order as taught by Johnson.

The suggestion/motivation for doing so would have been that doing so "gives the processor a larger set of instructions available for issue, improving its chances of finding instructions to execute concurrently" [See 1st full paragraph on page 22].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine with McNairy to obtain the invention as specified in claim 11.

27. Referring to claim 13,

McNairy and Johnson have taught the system of claim 11.

McNairy and Johnson have not explicitly taught a reorder buffer to track program order of instructions and to track speculative load instructions to be checked at retirement.

Johnson has taught a reorder buffer [See section 5.1.4 on pages 92-94] to track program order of instructions and to track speculative load instructions to be checked at retirement [The reorder buffer tracks all instructions, including load instructions that are to be checked at retirement; See 1st full paragraph on page 93].

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the system of McNairy and Johnson to include a reorder buffer to track program order of instructions and to track speculative load instructions to be checked at retirement as taught by Johnson.

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The suggestion/motivation for doing so would have been that doing so simplifies the maintenance of the instruction order [See 1st paragraph of section labeled "Using a Reorder Buffer to Simplify the Central Window" on page 139].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Johnson with McNairy and Johnson to obtain the invention as specified in claim 13.

28. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNairy and Johnson, as applied to claim 11 above, and further in view of Hennessy et al., "Computer Architecture: A Quantitative Approach" (Herein referred to as Hennessy).

29. Referring to claim 12,

McNairy and Johnson have taught the system of claim 11.

McNairy and Johnson have not explicitly taught a second processor coupled to the bus comprising a second data cache.

Hennessy has taught a second processor coupled to a bus comprising a second data cache [See Fig. 6.1 on page 531].

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the system of McNairy and Johnson to include a second processor coupled to a bus comprising a second data cache as taught by Hennessy.

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The suggestion/motivation for doing so would have been that doing so improves performance of the processing system [See 2nd paragraph on page 528].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Hennessy with McNairy and Johnson to obtain the invention as specified in claim 12.

30. Claims 4 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Morris in view of Arora, U.S. Patent No. 6,598,156.

31. Referring to claim 4,

Morris has taught the method of claim 2, further comprising:

correcting for erroneous speculation if the structure for tracking only load instructions does not contain a valid entry for the load instruction at load instruction retirement [See paragraph 32].

Morris has not explicitly taught that the correcting for erroneous speculation includes flushing a pipeline.

Arora has taught flushing a pipeline to correct for erroneous speculation [See Fig. 3, component 350; column 6, lines 26-31, 57-62].

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the correction for erroneous speculation as taught by Morris to include flushing a pipeline as taught by Arora.

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The suggestion/motivation for doing so would have been that doing so would prevent dependent instructions from using stale data [See column 6, lines 47-62].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Arora with Morris to obtain the invention as specified in claim 4.

32. Referring to claim 16,

Morris has taught the apparatus of claim 14, further comprising:

means for correcting erroneous speculation upon detection that a speculative load is not present in the means for tracking only speculative loads at the time of load instruction retirement [See paragraph 32].

Morris has not explicitly taught that the correcting for erroneous speculation includes flushing a pipeline.

Arora has taught flushing a pipeline to correct for erroneous speculation [See Fig. 3, component 350; column 6, lines 26-31, 57-62].

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the correction for erroneous speculation as taught by Morris to include flushing a pipeline as taught by Arora.

The suggestion/motivation for doing so would have been that doing so would prevent dependent instructions from using stale data [See column 6, lines 47-62].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Arora with Morris to obtain the invention as specified in claim 16.

33. Claims 15 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Morris in view of Johnson.

34. Referring to claim 15,

Morris has taught the apparatus of claim 14.

Morris has not explicitly taught a means for tracking only store instructions coupled to means for tracking only speculative load instructions.

Johnson has taught a means for tracking only store instructions [*store buffer; page 51, 1st full paragraph*] coupled to means for tracking only speculative load instructions [*The store buffer is part of the processor and, therefore, coupled to all of the processors components including the means for tracking only speculative load instructions*].

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the apparatus of Morris to include a means for tracking only store instructions coupled to means for tracking only speculative load instructions as taught by Johnson.

The suggestion/motivation for doing so would have been that doing so preserves the processor's in-order state [*page 51, 1st full paragraph*].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Johnson with Morris to obtain the invention as specified in claim 15.

35. Referring to claim 18,

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Morris has taught the machine readable medium of claim 17, having instructions stored therein which when executed causes a machine to perform a set of operations.

Morris has not explicitly taught tracking only a set of store instructions in a store queue of the out of order processor.

Johnson has taught tracking only a set of store instructions in a store queue [store buffer; page 51, 1st full paragraph] of the out of order processor.

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the system of Morris to include tracking only a set of store instructions in a store queue of the out of order processor as taught by Johnson.

The suggestion/motivation for doing so would have been that doing so preserves the processor's in-order state [page 51, 1st full paragraph].

Therefore, it would have been obvious to combine Johnson with Morris to obtain the invention as specified in claim 18.

Response to Arguments

36. Applicants arguments filed on July 13, 2006, have been fully considered but they are not found persuasive.

37. Applicant argues the novelty/rejection of claims 1-7 and 14-21 on pages 6, 7, 9 and 10 of the remarks, in substance that:

"*Morris* does not disclose 'a structure for tracking only *non-retired* load instructions only if the load instruction utilizes speculative data' (emphasis added). Instead, *Morris* discloses a speculative-load-instruction manager (SLIM) 29 that accepts retired speculative load instructions (par. [0029])." (1st paragraph on page 7)

These arguments are not found persuasive for the following reasons:

The speculative load instructions that are tracked by the SLIM of Morris are not fully retired. These instructions have been retired from the instruction queue 25 (paragraph 29). However, they have yet to be retired from the processor as a whole. The speculative load instructions are retired from the SLIM and the processor as a whole when the associated check instruction is retired from the instruction queue (See paragraph 32). Therefore, the speculative load instructions tracked by the SLIM of Morris are non-retired load instructions.

38. Applicant argues the novelty/rejection of claims 8-13 on pages 7-9 of the remarks, in substance that:

"Applicants have reviewed *McNairy* and are unable to find where the reference teaches or suggests the cited language [a load queue coupled to the store queue to track only non-retired speculative load instructions]. Instead, *McNairy* teaches an advanced-load-address table (ALAT) for dynamic memory disambiguation (p. 51-52)." (last paragraph on page 7)

These arguments are not found persuasive for the following reasons:

The advanced-load-address table (ALAT) of McNairy tracks advanced (i.e. speculative) load instructions (See "Advanced-load address table" section on pages 51-52). These advanced load instructions can still be invalidated and reissued (See "Advanced-load address table" section on pages 51-52) and are, therefore, not fully retired from the processor. Therefore, the advanced load instructions stored in/tracked by the ALAT of McNairy are non-retired advanced (i.e. speculative) load instructions.

Conclusion

39. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

40. The following is text cited from 37 CFR 1.111(c): In amending in reply to a rejection of claims in an application or patent under reexamination, the applicant or patent owner must clearly point out the patentable novelty which he or she thinks the claims present in view of the state of the art disclosed by the references cited or the objections made. The applicant or patent owner must also show how the amendments avoid such references or objections.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Benjamin P. Geib whose telephone number is (571) 272-8628. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon-Fri 8:30am-5:00pm.

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If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Fritz Fleming can be reached on (571) 272-4145. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Benjamin P Geib
Examiner
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